



Information Governance Team

Postal Address:
Coventry City Council
PO Box 7097
Coventry
CV6 9SL

www.coventry.gov.uk

E-mail: infogov@coventry.gov.uk

Phone: 024 7697 5408

14 November 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Request ID: FOI757703084

Thank you for your request for information relating to Vacant properties and their security.

You have requested the following information:

Section 1: Empty Business Rates Relief

1. A list of all properties that are currently in receipt of or have received empty business rates relief in the past six months.

For each property, please include:

- o The address of the property (this can be removed if a security concern)**
- o The type or classification of property (e.g., retail, office, industrial, etc.)**
- o The name of the owner**
- o The date the relief started and ended (if applicable)**

For Section 1, the information you requested falls under the exemption(s) in Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which relates to 'information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means.'

The exemption applies as the information is published and publicly available to view by accessing the Council website, please use the following link:

https://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/2178/non_domestic_rates_foi_report

We are unable to provide details of sole traders/individuals as this is exempt under s40 of the FOI. The Council considers that this information meets the definition for personal data set out in Section

3(2) and 3(3) of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) as:

(2) personal data means any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual (subject to subsection (14)(c))”

(3) “Identifiable living individual” means a living individual who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to –

*(a) an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data or an online identifier, or
(b) one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of the individual.”*

The Council thus considers that the requested information is caught by the exemption to disclosure contained in Section 40 (2) of the FOI Act and the related first condition of Section 40 (3).

A disclosure made under FOIA is judged to be to the wider world. The individuals involved would not reasonably expect that their details would be disclosed in this way.

Section 2: Double Council Tax Charges for Empty Properties

1. A list of all companies or individuals that have been charged a council tax premium (i.e., double council tax or an increased charge) due to the property being empty in the past 12 months.

For each case, please include:

- o The name of the liable party**
- o The postcode of the property**
- o The date the premium was applied**

We hold the information requested for Section 2 however we are withholding disclosure as the following exemptions apply - s40 and s31 as detailed below.

We are unable to provide details of sole traders/individuals as this is exempt under s40 of the FOI. The Council considers that this information meets the definition for personal data set out in Section 3(2) and 3(3) of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) as:

(2) personal data means any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual (subject to subsection (14)(c))”

(3) “Identifiable living individual” means a living individual who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to –

*(a) an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data or an online identifier, or
(b) one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of the individual.”*

The Council thus considers that the requested information is caught by the exemption to disclosure contained in Section 40 (2) of the FOI Act and the related first condition of Section 40 (3).

A disclosure made under FOIA is judged to be to the wider world. The individuals involved would not reasonably expect that their details would be disclosed in this way.

Regarding disclosure of postcodes for the commercial properties known to the Council which have

been vacant or empty for long term, the Council believe that Section 31(1)(a) of the Act is engaged and therefore will not be disclosing the requested information.

The Council maintains the view that disclosure of the postcodes/addresses would constitute information whose disclosure to the wider world would raise concerns around Law Enforcement.

To use this exemption, we are required to undertake a public interest test. The matters which were considered in applying the public interest test are as follows:

In considering the public interest for and against disclosure in this case, the Council has considered the public interest in disclosing a list of commercial properties in the City in terms of the contribution to demonstrating transparency of processes followed, allowing accountability for decisions taken and money spent and scrutiny of decisions made.

The Council considers that any disclosure made under the Act is a disclosure to the wider world and not to a specific individual for a particular purpose.

It is therefore concerned to avoid the risk of adding to the sum of criminal knowledge concerning empty commercial properties within the City. The Council takes the view that there is a significant increased risk of crime to empty properties.

Disclosure of addresses/postcodes increases visibility of vulnerable targets to motivated offenders and thus increases the risk of crime, and resultant negative effects, including but not limited to increased costs to both the public (and private) sectors and individuals which will be required to both make good damage and losses resulting and take preventative measures to combat such activity.

The Council judges that the public interest in withholding details of empty properties and in avoiding prejudice to the prevention of crime and the effect of this on both individuals and other organisations, would outweigh the public interest in disclosure at this time.

We would also highlight decision notices by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) upholding the use of Section 31(1)(a) in response to requests of this nature:

<https://ico.org.uk/media/action-weve-taken/decision-notices/2022/4022733/ic-145374-s4z7.pdf>

<https://ico.org.uk/media/action-weve-taken/decision-notices/2019/2615022/fs50786336.pdf>

In respect of

Section 3: Property Guardian Companies & Vacant Property Management

1. Selection Process:

What is the process and criteria used by your organisation to select Site security or property guardian companies for managing vacant properties?

2. Current Providers:

Which security companies are currently contracted or engaged by your organisation to protect your vacant property?

3. Tendering Schedule:

When is the next tendering or procurement process scheduled for property guardian or

other vacant property security services?

4. Decision Makers:

o Who is responsible for selecting property guardian companies (please provide role/department name and email address)?

o Who oversees the management and security of vacant properties (role/department name and email address)?

For Section 3, the information you requested falls under the exemption(s) in Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which relates to 'information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means.'

The exemption applies as the information is published and publicly available to view by accessing the Council website, please use the following link:

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/housing-1/empty-properties/6>

Section 4: Vacant or Empty Sites (All Property Types)

1. Current and Predicted Vacant Sites:

o How many vacant or empty sites does your organisation currently own or manage?

o How many sites are predicted to remain vacant or empty for one month or longer?

o How many operational sites are scheduled to closed in the next year, what are their addresses and to which team will they be given to manage?

We can provide current numbers of residential empty properties but not predicted numbers:

Non Domestic: 317

Council Tax: 20

2. Costs Associated with Vacant Sites:

Please provide annual spend on the management of vacant/empty sites, including:

o Business rates

o Utilities (electricity, water, gas)

o Security (CCTV, patrols, fencing, etc.)

o Maintenance and repairs

o Any other associated costs

3. Policy on Vacant Properties:

Please provide a copy of your organisation's policy or guidelines regarding the management, use, or disposal of vacant/void properties.

The Council do not actively manage vacant sites or buildings; just those where we have served an Enforcement Notice, the owner has failed to comply and we undertake the minimum works in default necessary to make the land or buildings safe and secure, if they are open to trespass.

Business rates and utilities remain the responsibility of the building owner. As we undertake works in default on both vacant and occupied buildings it is difficult to provide a definitive answer and therefore we are advising you as per Section 1(1) of the Act that this information is not held. The spend varies from year to year, however our total budget is very small (approximately £1000 to £4000 per financial year).

Section 5: Regeneration

1. The name, job title, and contact details (email and/or phone number) of the director or

lead officer responsible for:

- o Regeneration**
- o Property**
- o Housing**

Andy Williams - Director of Regeneration & Economy.

2. A list of housing estates or properties within your organisation that are planned for regeneration or redevelopment within the next ten years.

For each estate or property, please include:

- o The name and location of the estate or property**
- o The estimated timeline for regeneration or redevelopment**
- o The current stage of planning or consultation (e.g., pre-consultation, planning application submitted, etc.)**

The information you requested falls under the exemption(s) in Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which relates to 'information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means.'

The exemption applies as the information is published and publicly available to view by accessing the Council website, please use the following link:

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/planning-development> <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/localplan>

The supply of information in response to a FOI/EIR request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

For information, we publish a variety of information such as: [FOI/EIR Disclosure Log](#), [Publication Scheme](#), [Facts about Coventry](#) and [Open Data](#) that you may find of useful if you are looking for information in the future.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request – email: infogov@coventry.gov.uk

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email icocasework@ico.org.uk.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

Information Governance